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Pair charged with giving CIA files to Ghana

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WASHINGTON — The FBI yesterday brought espionage charges against a relative of the leader of Ghana and a CIA clerk whom he allegedly wooed into turning over secrets about U.S. spy operations in the African nation.

FBI Director William H. Webster said that the alleged spying over the last year and a half had been discovered by the CIA and that the CIA had cooperated in the bureau's investigation.

In court papers, the FBI said the clerk, Sharon M. Scranage, 29, of King George, Va., admitted her role during interrogation by FBI agents at CIA headquarters Monday through Wednesday. She was arrested yesterday morning.

The Ghanaian man, Michael Agbotui Soussoudis, 39, was arrested Wednesday night at a hotel in Springfield, Va., where he had been led to believe he would have a rendezvous with Scranage, the FBI said.

According to Justice Department sources, Soussoudis, a married, self-employed business consultant, and Scranage, a divorced, \$22,000-a-year operations support assistant at the CIA, became lovers in 1983, when Scranage was on assignment in Ghana's capital of Accra.

An FBI affidavit charged that the liaison allowed the Ghanaians to obtain the names of CIA agents stationed in their country and of Ghanaian dissidents who were secretly cooperating with the CIA. According to the affidavit, Soussoudis actively sought the names of the dissidents so he could have them arrested by the Ghanaian government.

The FBI said the Ghanaians also obtained a CIA report on efforts by the military government of Ghanaian leader Jerry J. Rawlings to get weapons from Libya.

And the sources, who declined to be identified, said the U.S. government, based on the interrogation of Scranage, believes that Rawlings, Soussoudis and Ghana's intelligence chief met with her recently in Accra and asked her to rifle classified files during her new assignment at CIA headquarters in this country.

Justice Department sources said Soussoudis was either a nephew or a cousin of Rawlings, who took over Ghana in a military coup in 1981 and

now chairs its Provisional National Defense Council.

Scranage and Soussoudis are charged with conspiracy to commit espionage, which carries a maximum penalty of life in prison.

In separate hearings yesterday in Alexandria, Va., U.S. Magistrate W. Harris Grimsley ordered both held without bail pending detention hearings next week.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Justin Williams said, "There is strong evidence that he (Soussoudis) ... is actively engaged in espionage against the United States." Later, he added that Soussoudis was, "in effect, associated with and serving the intelligence apparatus of the government of Ghana."

Soussoudis said, "I am not associated with any intelligence service in Ghana; I am just related to the head of state, that's all."

In a court affidavit, FBI agent Julianne Slifco alleged that spying began in December 1983 when Scranage, then a seven-year CIA veteran, was assigned to the agency's station in Accra as an operations support assistant. Scranage returned to Washington in May of this year.

CIA spokeswoman Kathy Pherson said the agency would not comment on the case, nor would she say whether Scranage had been suspended.

Ghanaian Embassy spokesman Harry Marshall was away from his office and not available for comment.

The FBI affidavit said that beginning in December 1983 and continuing until Wednesday night, Scranage turned over to Soussoudis such information as:

- The identities of all CIA personnel in Ghana, including the station chief.

- The identities of Ghanaians who were cooperating with the CIA, including some who had turned over classified Ghanaian government documents.

- Operational plans for CIA spying in Ghana.

The sources said some CIA personnel had to be recalled from Ghana after their covers were compromised.

Slifco said Scranage admitted that on May 24 of this year, just before her departure from Accra, she met with Soussoudis and Ghanaian offi-

cials, including a Ghanaian intelligence official.

The affidavit said Scranage repeated the information she had earlier supplied to Soussoudis and saw that the intelligence official had notes she had given Soussoudis.

At this meeting, the affidavit said, she was asked by the intelligence official to examine classified files at CIA headquarters in Reston, Va., and learn the identities of three Ghanaians traveling abroad who had supplied information to the CIA. She was told to supply the information to Soussoudis, who would travel to this country to get it.

The FBI said Scranage also admitted that she had given Soussoudis information from classified CIA cables and from a CIA intelligence report on military equipment that a Ghanaian group had requested from Libya.

She also said she gave him information on CIA communications and radio equipment, the affidavit said.

FBI sources said no more arrests were expected in the case.

Scranage is the fourth CIA employee charged with spying against the United States.

The most famous case was brought against David Henry Barnett, a former covert CIA agent in Indonesia who was charged in 1980 with selling the Soviets the identities of CIA agents in Indonesia and the identities of Indonesians cooperating with the CIA. Barnett, who had left the agency in 1970, had not begun spying for the Soviets until after he encountered financial problems in private life. He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 18 years in prison.

In 1978, former CIA clerk William P. Kampiles was arrested and charged with having sold the Soviets the top-secret manual for the U.S. KH-11 spy satellite for \$3,000. He was convicted and sentenced to 40 years in prison.

In 1984, Karl F. Koecher, a former contract translator for the CIA, was arrested in New York City on charges of supplying U.S. secrets to the Czechoslovakian intelligence service. He is awaiting trial.

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